

Senate proposal disrupts critical planning for do not call list

Meeting with state legislators today in a roundtable discussion, Jim Harsdorf, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, said a Senate budget proposal would gut consumer protection and put at risk Wisconsin's reputation for a clean business climate. Six of Consumer Protection's 13 investigators would be eliminated.

All told, Senate democrats would cut more than 28 positions—more than half of the state's Consumer Protection's staff. And Consumer Protection's \$2.3 million budget is slashed by more than \$1.5 million dollars.

Harsdorf said the proposal disrupts critical planning for Wisconsin's Do Not Call List to stop unwanted telemarketing calls. And Rep. David Ward of Ft. Atkinson said the deep cuts also threaten the existence of regional consumer protection offices serving Milwaukee, Green Bay and Eau Claire. "These offices return millions of dollars to consumers every year and were crucial in the state's successful case against Publishers Clearinghouse," said Ward.

Harsdorf asked, "Why tamper with one of the most cost-effective programs in state government, handling over 100,000 consumer complaints each year, when surveys show a high level of consumer satisfaction?"

Last year alone, DATCP returned nearly \$9 million to consumers—three times the size of DATCP's entire GPR consumer protection budget. DATCP consumer alerts saved *many millions more*.

The Senate budget proposal transferring Consumer Protection to the Department of Justice (DOJ) would undo the 1996 consolidation with DOJ that increased efficiency and improved consumer protection performance. DATCP is now returning more money to consumers and referring more cases for prosecution with fewer staff.

"Wisconsin consumers are best served by DATCP," said Harsdorf.

WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE,
TRADE AND
CONSUMER
PROTECTION

Web site:
<http://datcp.state.wi.us/>

REGIONAL OFFICES

Southeast
10930 W. Potter Rd., Suite C
Milwaukee, WI 53226-3450
414-266-1231

Northeast
Suite 146-A
200 N. Jefferson St.
Green Bay, WI 54301-5198
920-448-5110

Northwest
3610 Oakwood Hills
Parkway
Eau Claire, WI 54701-7754
715-839-3848

Southwest
2811 Agriculture Dr.
Madison, WI 53708-8911
608-224-4960